

Local Heroes and Super Models:

Governor's Award for Smart Growth Leadership

December 2004 Recipients



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Introduction

What are the Governor's Smart Growth Leadership Awards?



Mitt Romney
Governor

Kerry Healey
Lt. Governor

Upon taking office in January 2003, Governor Mitt Romney created the Office for Commonwealth Development (OCD) and appointed Secretary Douglas I. Foy to care for the built and natural environments by promoting sustainable development through the integration of energy, environmental, housing, and transportation policies, programs, and investments.

Sustainable development, or smart growth, is not about no growth, it's about growing where it makes the most sense: in and around central business districts or traditional city or town centers, near transit stations, or in areas that have been previously developed for commercial, industrial or institutional uses. It's about growing where there is existing infrastructure and utilities, within walking distance to schools, civic facilities, retail or employment centers, and other destinations. It's about developing in ways that are consistent with the [Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles](#)

Many communities have already taken major steps to encourage smart growth. The Governor's *Smart Growth Leadership Awards* were created to honor those communities and the organizations that support them, and to recognize their efforts as models for all 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. Supporting communities who are launching new efforts is the focus of the Governor's *Smart Growth Innovation Awards*. They provide an opportunity for municipalities to get the support they need to move ahead with the best and most creative smart growth development projects and planning efforts across the Commonwealth.

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Executive Office of Transportation
Department of Housing and Community Development
Department of Energy Resources

Town of Abington

“Abington Transit Oriented Development and Central Business District”

The Town of Abington has created a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning district encompassing 30 acres around its commuter rail station to encourage development that takes advantage of the rail line and complements surrounding residential areas.

The TOD zoning:

- provides for mixed residential and commercial development;
- reduces parking requirements for residential development to one space per dwelling unit and reduces parking requirements for commercial development by 50 percent;
- requires bicycle parking for each approved use; and
- requires pedestrian connections between the rail station and adjacent properties.

These zoning standards provide a model for transit-oriented development in Massachusetts. The TOD zoning district emerged from a cooperative effort between the town and regional planning agency, having been first proposed in the 1999 Abington Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Old Colony Planning Council



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Town of Amesbury
Office of Community and Economic Development
“Downtown Amesbury – A Showcase of Smart Growth”

The Town of Amesbury's Office of Community and Economic Development has led the transformation of a historic downtown into a vibrant mixed-use district, making the area both an attractive place to live and a destination for non-residents. The Town's comprehensive effort has involved the redevelopment of underutilized buildings, creation of new housing, cleanup of brownfields, and preservation of open space. Amesbury has put to work two assets found in many historic Massachusetts cities and towns -- vacant upper stories in downtown buildings, and a riverfront. The Town went “back to the future” by using the state Housing Development Support Program -- a component of the Community Development Block Grant Program -- to develop apartments on the upper stories of buildings with commercial space at the street level. And Amesbury created the Riverwalk -- a scenic pedestrian walkway and bike path that winds along the Powow River, providing a “greenway” along an old Boston & Maine rail bed from the Upper Millyard and Market Square to the Carriagetown Marketplace. The town has also undertaken extensive downtown streetscape improvements and established a successful commercial sign and facade rehabilitation program.



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Town of Amherst
Conservation Department
“Farmland Protection and Agricultural Viability”

The Town of Amherst has shown how a community can preserve its rural character by using zoning and other tools in a comprehensive strategy to protect agricultural land and support local farms. The Town’s agricultural zoning by-law represents one of the best uses of local zoning to protect open space anywhere in Massachusetts. It allows one dwelling per two acres but requires carefully planned cluster development and the permanent protection of agricultural land on a site. The agricultural zoning by-law is complemented by other zoning by-laws that direct development to village centers and facilitate concentrated development and protection of farmland. The Town has helped secure Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) on at least 34 farms totaling more than 2,000 acres. In acquiring APRs, the Town has used funds approved at town meeting, negotiated bargain sales, raised private donations, and worked with the Commonwealth’s APR program. Amherst leases town-owned land to farmers, organizes an annual Farm Appreciation Day, and has a Farm Committee that supports farm enterprises. Amherst has also adopted the Community Preservation Act and used CPA funds to support its coordinated farmland protection, housing development, and historic preservation activities.



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City of Brockton

Brockton Area Transit Authority

“The Intermodal Transportation Center: A Hub for Downtown Revitalization”

The Brockton Area Transit Authority's new Intermodal Transportation Center is the centerpiece of the City's efforts to revitalize its downtown. The Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT) has provided Brockton with efficient and comprehensive bus service for over twenty-five years. When the MBTA restored commuter rail service on the Old Colony Line, the City and BAT sited the train station downtown and developed a schedule that brings buses from throughout the region and facilitates transfers at the station. The City also improved security and amenities in the vicinity of the station. By using planning and zoning to make the most of restored rail service, Brockton and BAT generated significant private investment in the downtown area -- including over \$40 million for the renovation of two old shoe factories into market-rate housing. A Carnegie Mellon University study cited in *Money* magazine ranks Brockton number two in growth potential among cities of its size across the nation, and the city's bright prospects are due in no small part to its skillful linkage of transportation and revitalization planning.



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City of Cambridge
Community Development Department
“Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Program”

The City of Cambridge has invested in a “best in class” bicycle and pedestrian program that embraces the vision of a sustainable city where walking, biking, and public transit are the primary means of getting around. Cambridge recognizes that one mark of a great city is its walkability. For over a decade, the City has carried out a comprehensive program to make travel by foot and bicycle appealing, safe and convenient. Sidewalks have been widened and improved, streets have been retrofitted to include bicycle lanes, and intersections have been redesigned to work well for all users. Carefully planned and designed traffic calming measures have improved safety and livability on streets throughout Cambridge. With passage of a Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance in 1992, a permanent City bicycle and pedestrian program with staffing and an annual budget was established. The City’s growth policies and climate protection plan have contributed to a consistent and comprehensive effort that has made Cambridge a truly livable city.



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Town of Dennis
Planning and Appeals Office
“Reviving Main Street: Dennisport Village Center”

The Town of Dennis undertook a model grassroots planning process and adopted zoning that provides for the creation of a classic New England village center in Dennisport. Seeking to revitalize a struggling downtown governed by zoning by-laws that encouraged sprawl, the Town engaged residents, property owners, businesses and non-profit groups through a dedicated interactive web site, spaghetti suppers, and many other means. The community developed a vision of a compact, mixed-use village center appropriate to the character of Cape Cod with the help of historic postcards, images of other communities, and an intern's architectural renderings. Residents adopted the resulting zoning by-law overwhelmingly at town meeting. The zoning and design guidelines allow commercial, professional and residential uses on the same site, increased density, and traditional site and building designs. At the same town meeting, residents also voted to acquire 38 acres of open space, including 16 acres close to the village center. Residents will now be able to live, work, shop and recreate in one attractive neighborhood. The cost of the planning and rezoning process was minimal.



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East Boston

“Maverick Landing Hope VI Housing Initiative”

The redevelopment of the former Maverick Gardens public housing site in East Boston has catalyzed the rebirth of the surrounding neighborhood while ensuring that quality affordable housing will be part of the future. To be known as Maverick Landing, this \$110 million project is the sixth distressed public housing project in Massachusetts to undergo redevelopment with funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOPE VI program and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The redevelopment project includes the demolition of existing deteriorated housing, extensive site work, five new city streets and sidewalks, and the new construction of approximately 400 mixed-income apartments and homes in attractive town houses and mid-rise buildings. The development will also include a 1.5 acre new city park, a new community center and is a five-minute walk from Maverick Station on the MBTA Blue Line in East Boston. LoPresti Park, the underutilized city park across the street from the project, with dramatic views of downtown Boston, also is undergoing improvement. As the Maverick Landing project nears completion, two additional housing developments -- market rate condominiums and apartments to be developed on parcels close by -- are moving toward construction. The overall redevelopment of this waterfront area will result in a total of 1100 new or redeveloped housing units, new and improved public parks, multiple access points to and along the harbor, and new commercial opportunities near Maverick Station.



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**The City of Gardner
Department of Community Development and Planning
"The Levi Heywood Memorial Library"**

The City of Gardner, in cooperation with the Levi Heywood Memorial Library Trustees, took a 1.8 acre Brownfield site in the downtown, rezoned it, cleaned up the contamination, and built the Levi Heywood Memorial Library and a small park. The handsome library and park are situated within walking distance of hundreds of apartments and multi-family homes, and along a local bus route. A component of Gardner's "Rear Main Street Corridor Plan and Revitalization Strategy," the library became the focus of an intensive community fundraising effort, resulting in the collection of \$1.75 million in donations from individuals, businesses, foundations, and others. The donations, coupled with the City's willingness to donate the land and utilize bond funds, helped leverage grant funds from the Board of Library Commissioners and brownfield redevelopment support from federal and state agencies. Through hard work and visionary thinking, Gardner showed that a small community can provide a model for others across the Commonwealth.



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City of Lawrence
Lawrence CommunityWorks and Groundwork Lawrence
“Reviviendo Gateway Initiative”

The Reviviendo Gateway Initiative in Lawrence is a coalition of residents, property owners, businesses, civic institutions and others whose collaborative urban revitalization effort involves breaking down barriers between different ethnic and socio-economic groups while transforming the face of the city. This diverse coalition is creating a vibrant urban village with mixed-use infill development and historic rehabilitation. The Reviviendo Gateway area includes one of the nation’s most striking historic mill districts and the adjacent central business district and North Common neighborhood. The Initiative led a successful effort to have the City Council adopt a smart growth zoning overlay district allowing residential and mixed-use redevelopment in two million square feet of mill buildings. It has developed 25 handsome new affordable housing units on vacant lots and in abandoned buildings and launched the redevelopment of approximately 200 more mixed-income units. Six acres of new parkland are being reclaimed from brownfields. Canals and alleys are being cleaned up and replanted with native, drought-tolerant species. Neighborhood-based educational and economic development activities are helping ensure that residents have a stake in the future of their city. The Reviviendo Gateway Initiative is providing a foundation of fairness and buy-in for a new era of prosperity in Lawrence.



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Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea

“10 and 12 Summer Street”

Under the leadership of the local housing authority, an old rundown building in the heart of Manchester -- across the street from the commuter rail station and within walking distance from stores, restaurants, parks and community services -- was transformed into an attractive mix of affordable and market-rate housing with both rental and homeownership units. The housing authority and other town officials provided exceptional support for the project, including \$1.2 million in the town's own funds and \$40,000 from the town's share of federal HOME funds. 10 and 12 Summer Street is a consummate transit-oriented project and an outstanding example of the importance of municipal leadership and involvement in affordable housing. The project also demonstrates that new affordable housing can make an important aesthetic contribution to a town center -- the sponsor transformed a distressed existing apartment complex into handsome housing units for low- to moderate-income individuals and families in a highly affluent community. The homeownership component of the project was permitted through Chapter 40B.



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The mission of the Massachusetts Office for Commonwealth Development (OCD) is to care for the built and natural environment by promoting sustainable development through the integration of energy, environmental, housing, and transportation agencies' policies, programs and regulations. OCD will encourage the coordination and cooperation of all agencies, invest public funds wisely in smart growth and equitable development, give priority to investments that will deliver living wage jobs, transit access, housing, open space, and community-serving enterprises, and be guided by a set of sustainable development principles.

1. REDEVELOP FIRST. Support the revitalization of community centers and neighborhoods. Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure rather than the construction of new infrastructure in undeveloped areas. Give preference to redevelopment of brownfields, preservation and reuse of historic structures and rehabilitation of existing housing and schools.

2. CONCENTRATE DEVELOPMENT. Support development that is compact, conserves land, integrates uses, and fosters a sense of place. Create walkable districts mixing commercial, civic, cultural, educational and recreational activities with open space and housing for diverse communities.

3. BE FAIR. Promote equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development. Provide technical and strategic support for inclusive community planning to ensure social, economic, and environmental justice. Make regulatory and permitting processes for development clear, transparent, cost-effective, and oriented to encourage smart growth and regional equity.

4. RESTORE AND ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT. Expand land and water conservation. Protect and restore environmentally sensitive lands, natural resources, wildlife habitats, and cultural and historic landscapes. Increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space. Preserve critical habitat and biodiversity. Promote developments that respect and enhance the state's natural resources.

5. CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES. Increase our supply of renewable energy and reduce waste of water, energy and materials. Lead by example and support conservation strategies, clean power and innovative industries. Construct and promote buildings and infrastructure that use land, energy, water and materials efficiently.

6. EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES. Support the construction and rehabilitation of housing to meet the needs of people of all abilities, income levels and household types. Coordinate the provision of housing with the location of jobs, transit and services. Foster the development of housing, particularly multifamily, that is compatible with a community's character and vision.

7. PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION CHOICE. Increase access to transportation options, in all communities, including land- and water-based public transit, bicycling, and walking. Invest strategically in transportation infrastructure to encourage smart growth. Locate new development where a variety of transportation modes can be made available.

8. INCREASE JOB OPPORTUNITIES. Attract businesses with good jobs to locations near housing, infrastructure, water, and transportation options. Expand access to educational and entrepreneurial opportunities. Support the growth of new and existing local businesses.

9. FOSTER SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES. Strengthen sustainable natural resource-based businesses, including agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Strengthen sustainable businesses. Support economic development in industry clusters consistent with regional and local character. Maintain reliable and affordable energy sources and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels.

10. PLAN REGIONALLY. Support the development and implementation of local and regional plans that have broad public support and are consistent with these principles. Foster development projects, land and water conservation, transportation and housing that have a regional or multi-community benefit. Consider the long-term costs and benefits to the larger Commonwealth.

For additional information, contact the Massachusetts Office for Commonwealth Development at (617) 573-1380.

<http://www.mass.gov/ocd/>



Mitt Romney
Governor

Kerry Healey
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